STATE AND CONSUMER SERVICES AGENCY • ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER, GOVERNOR

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NEWS RELEASE

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PROFESSIONALS ACHIEVING CONSUMER TRUST SUMMIT A SUCCESS

Benefits for Consumers, Professionals and Trades People to be Felt for Years to Come

SACRAMENTO – California's first-of-its-kind Professionals Achieving Consumer Trust (PACT) Summit concluded November 21 in Los Angeles, but the work done there will continue to be a huge benefit to Californians.

"Our goal was to bring together government agencies, consumer organizations, law enforcement and the public in order to improve consumer protection across the state by fostering better communication, cooperation and collaboration," said Department of Consumer Affairs (DCA) Director Carrie Lopez. "We succeeded beyond my expectations." See testimonials from PACT Summit participants here.

Most of DCA's nearly 40 Boards and Bureau Advisory Committees all held their regular meetings during the week-long summit. About 3,000 people attended over the course of the summit.

While at the Summit, Board and Bureau Advisory Committee members were offered training sessions specially designed for them. They also met with and strengthened relationships with partners in consumer protection. These activities were designed to increase efficiency and enhance consumer protection.

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Two issues critical to the future of California and its economy were focused on by attendees:

First was the value of the California trade and professional license. For consumers, the California license means they can count on competent, professional work because the licensee has met certain standards. If a licensee harms the consumer, the consumer can bring their complaints to the Department and the licensee will be disciplined. For licensees, the license certifies that they've met those standards of competency. And it means a level playing field; that their competitors have to meet the same competency requirements.

Secondly, the attendees focused on the coming shortage of licensed trades people and professionals. Unless something is done, California will fall short of meeting not only the demand for these workers but in meeting the demand for a whole host of professionals and trades people. There are already too few sources of qualified workers to meet the projected needs of California. And in some industries – particularly the health care industry – there is a critical shortage of workers in ethnically diverse communities that has existed for years. Making the situation worse is the fact that aging Baby Boomers are leaving the workforce, creating an even greater potential shortfall. DCA's regulatory Boards and Bureaus heard from the Labor and Workforce Development Agency, which outlined some of the coming challenges for California's workforce.

"By addressing these issues, and by offering training specifically designed for our Board and Bureau Advisory Committee members, we have built a solid foundation on which to raise consumer protection to new heights and send a strong message to consumers that we are committed to earning their trust for years to come," said Lopez.

The chair or president of each of DCA's Boards and Bureau Advisory Committees present at the ceremony signed a PACT Document reiterating their commitment to excellence in consumer protection. The PACT Document reinforces their roles as leaders in consumer protection and stresses important values they pledged to uphold, including accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, integrity, customer service, employees, unity, creativity, education, and action. See video of the signing here.

Other video, photos and press materials from the PACT summit can be found at http://www.dca.ca.gov/summit/media.shtml.

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